

REMARKS

Claims 1-35 are pending in this application. Claims 28-35 are added. Claims 1 and 28 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and § 103(a)

Claims 1-22, 24, 26 and 27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Baron (U.S. Patent No. 6,459,388). Claims 23 and 25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(c) as being unpatentable over Baron in view of Suzuki (U.S. Patent No. 5,831,670). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner will note that independent claims 1 and 28, and dependent claims 2-27 and 29-35 are now pending.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to advance the prosecution of the present application, the Applicants are hereby submitting a verified English translation of the first priority document JP 2000/117668 filed on April 19, 2000.

Since the filing date of April 19, 2000 of JP 2000/117668 predates the effective U.S. filing date of January 18, 2001 of the Baron reference, Baron cannot be used as prior art against the claims of the present invention.

Since the remaining references of the prior art of record fail to teach or suggest the deficiencies of the Baron reference identified hereinabove, Applicants submit that this rejection is improper and should be withdrawn. All claims of the present invention are now in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION


All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

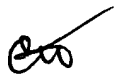
It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Carl T. Thomsen, Registration No. 50,786 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Attachment: Verified English translation of priority document JP 2000/117668